1: Hanks E-5 (1953-1954) 1964 AO7 Central Thai AO7

[P. 1]

SUMMARY

On the assumption that a woman's physical and mental condition at childbirth is a product of her life-long daily habits and ideas as well as any particular injunctions set up to insure well-being in pregnancy and parturition, the cultural scene was searched to ascertain all possible relevancies.

The farmers of Bang Chan lived in a tropical, rice-growing terrain, annually flooded by the monsoon run-off. Food was plentiful even if cash was not. Except for better housing and equipment, and a greater enjoyment of market novelties, the rich lived much like the poor. The work in the fields by women paralleled that by men. Sharp physical demands, especially at planting and harvest, made them muscular.

At marriage the partners were fully mature and no woman was married against her wishes. The birth of a child was welcomed as leading to higher personal, social, and economic status.

The underlying concepts which explain why the food and other injunctions, both pre-natal and post-partum, and the ritual behavior took their particular forms, are explained.

The human body, harboring multiple immaterial souls, was seen as composed of earth, fire, water, and wind. Illness was caused by intrusive disruption of these four elements, or by soul loss. Food and medicines had properties which could be used to restore balance in the elements. The traditional curers or exorcisers had magical and herbal remedies obtained ritually from a teacher. Since Buddhist phrasings, often read from old texts in weekly sermons, molded Bang Chan's conception of life, the ultimate cause of health or illness was the presence or absence of merit. This determined one's kam (karma), the balance sheet of virtuous actions which one added to, or reduced by sinning throughout successive existences over eons of time.

The Buddhist cosmic view of individuals as separate autonomous beings brought it about that help was the only dynamic relationship possible between people. The bonds established by helping people, on this earth, especially in the tasks of feeding priests, lasted on into successive incarnations. Thus, meritorious people met again and might marry again. Families had continuity over time, and babies were born into the "right"

779 family. Babies lacking in merit died at their birth, just as mothers whose merit had run low suffered or died in childbirth.

84 A soul desiring rebirth flew into the womb of a woman at [775] conception. By care and imitative magical practices, both [774] parents helped the fetus grow but the mother gave the baby its [789] body. Parturition was a joint effort of mother and child, the course and outcome of which was determined by their respective stores of merit. After delivery the child was blessed, his soul seized and tied in, and ritual means taken that he not wander from home throughout life. A post-partum rest of 846 several days was taken beside a hot fire, the purpose of which 398 was both physiological, i.e. to dry the uterus, and ritual, to bring about full "ripe" adulthood.

The fire, which was consecrated, strengthened a woman and made her a better nourisher, mature, more compassionate, and eligible to handle magic and the tender souls of living creatures. Thus she was fitted for her life-calling as a woman. The comparable ceremony of maturation for men, when they too 193 were changed from "raw" to mature, compassionate, and strong 788 males for their calling of fatherhood and leadership, was 562 ordination into the Buddhist priesthood. Only those men and women who had undergone their respective rites of maturation were eligible to handle magic. Men's magic gave power, control and could be aggressive. Women's magic was limited to nurturing purposes, and could never be destructive. The [688] respective areas of magical competence and right were autonomous and rigidly separated on pain of severe sanctions.

844 This view of the role of women in life and the events of childbirth in the earthly and cosmic scene, had the effect of giving women in childbirth a positive, secure, and relaxed outlook, and an understanding and acceptance of suffering so that they had little fear.

[128] How careers in midwifery, whether professional or amateur were established, and the nature of the specialty and of a practice are discussed.

128 The understanding of, and the attitudes toward, modern 844 medicine are given along with findings accounting for 846 acceptance or rejection of modern hospital care for parturients. 369 Accepting the changes that were observed in the practices 178 surrounding childbirth proved to be a means of expressing partial withdrawal from the old life of a farmer and a step towards the glitter of urban ways. In the desire to be seen as progressive, the fire reportedly had been shortened, market products substituted for the consecrated fire, and other urban ways introduced.

000 For persons interested in introducing changes in the

Chapter II

MAN AND WORLD

771 Bang Chan had for years heard preaching from Buddhist scriptures. Co-existing with these teachings were Hindu elements referring to Brahma, Shiva, and others. People also believed in an animistic lore concerning frightening [192] ghosts and spirits (phī), protecting deities (thēwadā), maternal goddesses, princely spirit-lords, and other supernatural guardians of a more or less benevolent nature. To these beliefs were added special bodies of knowledge, such as sacred literature from India and traditions of astrology from both China[8] and India. Other elements might be traced to Muslim influence, just as Muslims shared some of the foregoing references with their Buddhist neighbors. Bang Chan shaped its views of nature and man from all these sources. However, we shall not try in what follows to specify the sources of its beliefs.

826 ### The Human Body

774 The body of flesh, blood, bones, and other materials, 184 harbored the noncorporeal aspects, in particular a person's 192 merit story (kam; Skr: karma) and his several souls, viz., the Khwan, the winyan, and the four chēttaphūt (cf.J.R. Manks, 1959). Views of the human body formed no unitary system, but were as varied as their origins. Thus, sometimes villagers distinguished the material from the non-material: "a human being is composed of two aspects: rūp (body) and arūp (non-body)." Sometimes learned persons referred to the Hindu-Buddhist concept of 32 parts of the body, one of which, the winyan-soul, was the "organizer" of the others.

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8. No trace was discovered of the Chinese concept of Yin as female, dark, cold, and evil, etc., and Yang as its opposite.

[115] 9. Ming (Mc.F. 880) was once given as a term for "soul" by a Muslim informant, but without further information.

Diet in Body Maintenance and Curing

261 262 753 Because food created fire, the daily diet could be a source of illness or a therapeutic means. Every food had known properties for heating or cooling, and for other effects as well. Guava fruit, alcohol, and turtle or cobra curry were heating. Eggs were cooling. Depending on the occasion, ice and iced concoctions were over-heating or over-cooling. They were always "dangerous during menstruation." Banana varied according to the variety: kluai hŏm (fragrant banana) was undesirably cooling and caused either diarrhea or constipation (Hauck, 1958:27); kluai nam wâ was less deleterious (salâeng) while kluai nâm was good for the sick or for parturients (Boonlong).

252 262 [758] [846] Properties in food changed in cooking. Boiling made rice "ripe" (nuk) and so available as nourishment (Anuman Rajadhon:77). Even the method of cooking varied the properties. For the sick and for parturients, the banana variety called kluai hak nuk was good if baked, but not if cooked in syrup (Boonlong).

262 753 827 Some foods were "incompatible" with, and so aggravated, certain illnesses. Air-borne food in the form of smell was incompatible with, and compounded, a condition of wind excess. Death or blindness ensued. On the other hand, asafetida might be tied to the wrist of a new-born baby so that the smell, an established carminative, might cure the excess wind in his stomach manifested as flatulence.

262 [774] [782] Beneficial foods were encouraged. Of all these none surpassed rice, the main sustenance of the body, "the only true food" (Yong Chutima, in Hauck, 1958:27) and source of "strength" to the farmer. Rice was a safe food. It never disturbed elements. Eating rice, as compared with meat, had no overtone of taking life. One could eat one's fill without any sin. Most of all, rice nourished the human khwan, for each grain contained a part of the khwan of the divine Rice Mother. Furthermore, any food offered ritually to a spirit or to make merit acquired strengthening properties, and was afterwards given to priests, children, or to the sick.

[776] Foods with known dangers were avoided. "Kluai tâi banana, a variety full of seeds, was never eaten because it contained a female ghost (phi)." Jackfruit was avoided by lactating women as a direct source of wind-excess. Fruit in general was not dangerous but "did not give enough strength for a rice farmer. It was all right for an orchardist."

828 753 or fainting, and also such localised trauma as abscesses. Similar behavior followed the influence of malevolent magical amulets, incantations, and love magic. Natural intrusions may be exemplified by the seasonal influences of rain, which brought on too much water element; of heat, which increased fire; and of wind, which cooled too much or brought in certain fevers, e.g. north fever (khai nŵa). An accident was a natural cause of disequilibrium. A cut might let out the air or a soul.

• 774 [762] [953] Any lost soul, if not restored, meant death. Souls were lost from falls or frights or from spirit attack, a condition recognised by persistent crying, hysteria, and unconsciousness. The exits were at the top of the head, the palms of the hands, and the soles of the feet, the latter 2 sometimes localised at the 2 thumbs and the 2 great toes. One of the old beliefs associated an element with one of the four phŭttaphôt souls (Textor:136). When one of these souls was lost one whole element was gone. Loss of the khwan soul was more frequent than any other, especially during childhood. Its care [844] throughout life was very much in mind. The khwan[18] played an especially prominent part during childbirth.

755 [762] [757] If a person were only slightly sick, he might first try to overcome his physical complaint by attention to diet. Very rarely did he by himself buy some medicine at a drug store. If it were a case of a child's lost khwan, women performed the rite for its recovery. When the khwan of an adult was affected, man performed a strengthening rite (thăa khwan), or a priest gave a holy water bath. If the person were very ill, holy cotton thread (săi sin) was tied at wrist, ankle, and neck so as to shut off the soul exits. An elder relative or spouse might also "hon," i.e. vow food or liquor in return for the help of supernatural beings; or, with Buddhist "sacred things" in mind, promise the ordination of the afflicted person, or oneself, or some interested relative. In this case, the relatives had long since turned for help from the arts of medicine.

278 755 The Arts of Medicine

Medical knowledge comprised on the one hand a pharmacology of materia medica, and on the other, the far more important

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18. The conceptualisation of this soul was Brahmanic in source, rather than Buddhist (cf. Martinie, 1952:378).

The Pre-natal Baby

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The baby's body "started as a hair." After conception it was necessary that the father, with his semen during intercourse 843
"strengthen" the baby. There was less, if any, intercourse in the last weeks of pregnancy, though no prohibition against it. [833]
Food eaten by the mother, "transformed into blood," built the baby's body. For the first 3 months the child was a "clump of blood." By the third month the mother felt a shaking (ran) at the clump. This was the "khwan soul flitting in and out of the [774]
baby's heart." The picture of pre-natal growth was expressed by the chant at the tonsuring ceremony:

> "The body of a child inside its mother's womb grows gradually like droplets of oil coagulating at the end of the yak's hair. The 5 apertures appear, the nose, 2 ears, and 2 eyes; and then the hair, hands and feet. The infant's hands embrace its placenta from which it sucks water day and night. There it sits on its mother's faeces while her newly eaten foods pack closely on its head. Its chin rests upon its knees, its face is turned toward the mother's back as it leans back against her belly. It looks like a monkey in the rain, sitting, waiting, trying to warm itself in a hole at the foot of a tree" (S.S.).

Before birth (and after), the baby was weak and tender (ɔn), [826]
with especially soft, thin skin.

The Pregnant Woman

In pregnancy, a woman saw herself as moving toward the fulfillment of her long adumbrated female office[23] of nurturer. The essence of her femaleness, to be "soft and yielding, to lengthen life by nourishing others" was heightened.

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23. To paraphrase Fortes: "office," subsuming both status and role, means "calling, occupation, or life-task." It serves "instrumental or utilitarian ends," yet also has the "other dimension of duty and responsibility enjoined, sanctioned and above all symbolised in ceremonial or ritual forms placing it in the moral order" (Fortes:62).

844 989 852 would later manifest their characteristics. Much as Dūan loved her own mother, Lek ought not to winnow the child because she had had the misfortune to lose 3 babies in infancy. An older person was desirable, for longevity, too, indicated virtue, and the child would then also live long. Of all the women present, besides her mother, Sāi was the one Dūan trusted and respected most, and Sāi had raised healthy babies. Dūan turned to her. "Please winnow and bless the baby." She wanted, as every mother did, to catch and so claim the child for herself.

Sāi seated herself close to Duan, picked up and raised high the tray with the little boy and the auspicious items. Waving the tray in a circular motion slowly from left to [539] right, clockwise, she recited the old words: "Three days a spirit child; on the fourth day, a human child! Whose child is this? Is this the child of a female pot? Of a jar? Come, take this child!" Three times Sāi chanted these old words and on the third, Dūan cried out, "Mine!" The tray with the child was gently tossed in her direction. She caught it as it slid toward her. Then Sāi took the [774] holy thread and tied some around each of the child's wrists and ankles to seize and "welcome" its soul (kānraphkhwan), giving the while the traditional blessing. "Come, khwan! [539] Come my own child! Stay well and eat well! Do not get sick or have fever! Be cool and happy! Feed your father and mother until they are old. Hold the walking stick with the gold head, or the stick with jewels on its top! Stay at home like the bottom of the house post! Watch the house like a cat! Eat and stay here! Never go roaming! Be fat as the golden ash pumpkin, heavy as the long melon, strong as an elephant in must! Be the head priest when ordained and the leader of men when you leave the priesthood! Come, khwan!"[35] Thus Dūan claimed the child for herself and for her family, to nourish and raise. Because such a fine person as Sāi had started this son on its life-habits, and Dūan was already sparing no efforts in assuring his progress, he would be a good boy, and reciprocate her pain and effort.

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[539] 35. Another version added the words, "Have the strength of Hanuman! Hold the stick with the iron head! Be a student." For a girl, "If you have a family, keep cool and happy! Earn your livelihood (thammā hā kin)! Have enough to use and eat! Do not lower (ram) your face, or eyes," i.e. "don't be poorer than your friend." A China-born Thai woman's blessing was "Mother, nourish, and care for this child. Do not let it be hurt or have fever."

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The genetic connections of those who did not help in cash, or labor at, say, cremations or cooperative work-parties were forgotten. Degree of help was a measure of kinship solidarity, and even marked the outer boundaries of kinship.

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The word "help" turned up over and over again in the context of childbirth. Birth came about because a married couple, already steeped in the knowledge that they had been so helped by their parents, "helped another individual to new life" through the mingling of semen and blood. The midwife's role was merely to "help." When a woman engaged a midwife, her words were, "Will you come to help me?" A baby having trouble breathing right after delivery "had to be helped for half an hour." Most important, only through the reciprocal help of mother and child was rebirth to earthly life implemented at all. Parturition was an active, cooperative venture between 2 autonomous beings. The child set the time for labor to start by "deciding to be born" when his 32 parts were "complete,"[38] and he had worked off sufficient sin in purgatory to permit rebirth. The mother by her labor "helped the child to be born," but she could not succeed unless he actively "helped," too. Though other assistance to her was desirable, such as persons to support her back and press out the infant, only his help was essential. Without it she had a hard or unsuccessful labor. A woman who gave birth successfully without outside help created no stir because it was evident that the baby had been helpful.

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38. Informants were not uniform in opinion here. Some said the khwan (or winyan) was the first "part" to establish itself--arriving at the moment of conception--others that it was the last (Textor:262). In either case it was highly volatile during pregnancy, and the trapping by winnowing at birth was the major means of rooting it in the person. During pregnancy, medicine for wind in the fetus was given "which was not effective if there were no khwan," but whether the khwan was the mother's or the child's was not certain.

retreat (ōk phansā) in order that her child would come out (ōk) more easily. Here none sought to divide the worlds of the natural and the supernatural, or to mark off "imitative magic" from the "learning by example of the natural world." A stronger influence came from more powerful agents, so that the effects of the Buddhist temple carried greater effect than the actions of a mere neighbor. Yet any like influence was of aid, especially in a verbal similarity. Thus, an event occurring on a Friday was apt to be auspicious because the Thai name for Friday contains an element identical in sound (though etymologically different) to the word for happiness (wansuk=Friday; suk=happiness), and for the fortunate status of true adulthood (suk=mature, ripe).

Stability in a Floating World

In explaining why some children were "born easily and were easy to raise" (liang ngai) certain persons simply said, "They were born into the right family. Those born to the wrong family usually die." In defining the "right" family, merit, habituation, and helpfulness converge.

Most families were thought to live together as a group in life after life. In view of the separateness of souls, how was this brought about? The key lay in the conviction that people who made merit together met in future lives. Since most merit-making was undertaken as an enterprise of the nuclear family, sometimes with close kinsmen and friends, they would find each other. Some of the eagerness of friends to help (chuai ngan) with cash or labor was in order to meet in later lives. These persons were used to each other, used to helping each other, and so might marry. Thus, if they lived rightly, the nuclear family, maybe with an infusion of beloved old friends, expected to carry on in the next existence. Although a family's prosperity proved its merit, and its wealth facilitated making more merit, continuity in time was not limited to the wealthy. Proof that a couple had been married in a previous life lay in the birth of a boy as first born. Such a couple was known as a "khū" (pair), and divorce was held to be highly unlikely.

How did a child find its "right" family? After whatever necessary stay in purgatory, the khwan soul of a deceased member roosted in a tree near to its old home, then flew into an accustomed womb. One recalls the start of the blessing (p.48), "Come, khwan! Come my own child!" A woman hoped that the khwan was one previously born to her. "A couple lost its first child. Later the wife was fearing for the life of their sickly second-born." The husband said, "It is according to your sin and merit. If the child is your own child, he will live with you. If not, he cannot."

761 Since only meritorious children were born into the
775 "right family," they were helpful and so easy to raise. The
593 easiest to raise were reincarnations of babies deceased in
829 the mother's present life. "A girl of three died. Her father
782 dreamed he was at her coffin. She asked for water which he gave her, then brought her home. Months later a boy was born, so easily raised up that people knew it was a reincarnation of that girl." Here amiability and the change to male sex demonstrated merit. In another tale, "a woman lost many babies at birth. Her husband, thinking it was the same child trying to be born to that mother, marked the forehead of the last deceased baby. His surmise proved correct, because the next baby born had this mark on its forehead."

This assumption that a woman's children were born to her over and over led to a measure of control over the cooperativeness of the child in the womb. A child trained to "good habits" became a meritorious adult who, when reborn, would of course "help" his mother in childbirth. It was advisable to set one's own child into paths of proper behavior, for he could be born again to a descendent, and in all likelihood to oneself.

On the other hand, families were not closed groups. "Like a leech that sticks in one place, then goes to stick somewhere else, so a deceased person may be reborn somewhere else," said a priest. The marriage blessing stated, "May angels, not criminals or beggars, reincarnate as your children." Thus was explained why upright parents might have a disobedient, roaming child. He had roamed into a new family which perhaps he had met during a pleasant casual visit to them in another life. If he did not stay home to make merit with his present family, a wayward child would roam out of it as easily as he came in. Here was the ultimate danger in visiting around too much.

761 Because all individuals lacking in merit died off at
593 birth, some of whom because they got into the wrong family,
782 a selective process continuously weeded out the extremely non-meritorious so that those who were born usually survived. In fact, Hauck's figure of 90.6 live births [163] (1956:33), the percentage of total pregnancies shows how many meritorious babies were born to the right family!

859 The Winnowing Ceremony

844 This ceremony, described in Dūan's tale, was usually
774 performed shortly after delivery, though it might occur anytime during the first three days of a baby's life. The child, placed on the tray (twins were laid together or separately) was claimed by the mother or the father, who

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called out "Mine!" ("khǭng chan" [female speaking] or "phom" [male speaking]). Never did a parent say "ours!"[44] Sometimes the mother might ask a relative or friend present to claim the child, and so become a godparent.

As the first human step to control the volatile khwan, the first objective of winnowing a baby was to seize it (kan rap khwan) and so "complete" the child's person.[45] By tying holy thread at the wrist and ankle soul-exits, the khwan which had flitted in and out of the womb was given root. It was still flighty, but now it had a life-long home.

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Secondly, the child was given membership in a human family. Connection through blood and semen did not establish kinship. At first, the child hovered between corporeal and non-corporeal existence. "The child is not fully human for the first 3 days." This period was under the supernatural control of Mother Sǖ, for babies "never died during the first 3 days after birth. They might be born dead or they died 6 or 7 days later." The shock of dropping the child on the tray "made him forget his life as a spirit." When someone cried "mine!" the child finally cut his relationship with the spirit-world. As an old woman explained, "The ties are the important part [of the ceremony]. They show that the child belongs to someone. Once a tie fell off one wrist. The child cried and cried until it was restored," fearing its lost khwan would attach itself elsewhere. The claiming set up kinship as a contract before witnesses. Whoever announced responsibility for the child's care, and this was usually the mother, deserved reciprocal care in old age. Other relatives would also help to bring him through to maturity. He would not be so frightened of an evil spirit because of family support, nor of the "ghost of an ancestor" who would be recognized as a relative.

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Third, the ceremony strengthened the child. By giving him through the ties a stable khwan, he "grew better, cried less, and did not get sick."

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The incorporation of as many auspicious elements as possible into the ritual was customary. Since the child took

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44. A winnowing tray (basket) had the capacity to "trap" spirits. It could seize or trap not only the khwan soul, but, at New Year's, one of the fun ghosts (Textor:371).

45. There is no convenient way of expressing "ours" in Thai in this restricted sense (id.).

852 856 789 after whoever claimed him, a mother might ask a "wealthy person, of polite, calm, and good character" to do this. The baby also started an association with whatever items were placed on his tray with him. Besides the most common ones mentioned in Dûan's tale were ink and books (which induced learning); gold, rings, jewelry, money (wealth); bergamot thorn, a tin of kaffir lime (sharp wit); and a razor (a good wood-cutter for the fire; said to be a Muslim custom). When the baby was finally transferred from tray to cradle these items were returned to household use. The bamboo cutter, rhizome of phlai, and earth associated with cutting the cord were taken off the tray and buried with the placenta. Their significance lay as part of a binding ritual. The phlai and earth might be taken off ahead of time.

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Binding Rituals

829 774 Because Bang Chan accorded autonomy to every individual, whatever his age, everyone had the free choice to go wherever his advantage lay. In infancy and childhood, the khwan soul might flee at any time, and could only be recaptured by a khwan-calling or khwan-ladling rite (Textor: 396-411). After about the age of 8, a tham khwan ceremony helped to bind in and strengthen the khwan soul. In daily life, the fear that a loved one, whatever his age, would withdraw or run away if unhappy, frightened, or overburdened dogged people their whole lives. Casual episodes were sometimes viewed with alarm. Once a boy of 10 on his own initiative went off to live a few days with his grandmother only 10 minutes away by boat. His mother complained that he had wandered (pai thîeo) and feared it would become a habit. Parents dreaded that grown children would find work away from the village; that daughters would elope; that adopted children or spouses run away; or even that their child, at marriage, would elect to go live with his in-laws. At any time a husband might go into the priesthood leaving his wife and children to fend for themselves, though here the wife had to give her permission and the motive was sympathetically viewed.

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A traditional jesting threat was to "go away to the jungle-forest" (pai pâ).

The economic and social base for this fear of losing a child to the world was that children were a parental investment with an anticipated return: for the trouble of bearing and raising them, children should work for the family until their marriage. Furthermore, a boy was to bring his parents merit by being ordained, while a girl was to care for them in their old age. If a child moved away

Even after the child was out, the pile of wood was still a drying womb to be treated carefully. It was also the wood for a consecrated fire. To drop a piece of this wood carelessly both injured and desecrated. If this happened a disease of the eyes "sang," came at once for which no male medical powers had any remedy. The only cure was in women's hands, that essence of maternity, "a drop of mother's milk--any mother's." The larger implications of this linking of fire and maternity are dealt with in the next section.

The Fire of Maturity

In the events surrounding the birth of the child, the significant step for the woman personally was the post-partum rest period by the fire (yū fai). Far more was at stake than just drying the uterus. The fire rest was one of the series of rites of the life-cycle which marked the course of an individual from birth to death. The others were the cutting of the umbilical cord, first head shaving, top-knot tonsure, ordination (for men), marriage, and cremation. Through the consecrated fire a woman formally achieved full maturity: she became suk (cooked, ripe, mature). Maturity did not come just by bearing a child. The fire brought about the transformation.[46]

How was mature womanhood viewed? What was the essential female role and office? Bang Chan saw a woman as one who "feeds and lengthens lives." As the custodian of growth she was, first, the guardian of the vital, essential khwan soul, and especially of the immature, flighty khwan of growing persons.

Secondly, a woman was a donor of nourishment (liang).[47] Her primary responsibility was to nurture children and other tender beings. She nourished the fetus with her blood. After

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46. "The fiery element digests what is eaten or drunk...and cooks the body and gives it its beauty of complexion. And the body thus cooked is kept free from decay" (Warren:157-158).

47. All the deities "concerned with the welfare of our bodies and our khwan" were maternal (mae), e.g. Rice, Water, Earth, "Mother-Goddess" (Mae Sū), and several Mother-Princesses (Chao Mae). Fire, and maybe wind, were both female (mae) and male (phra) (Textor:485). To these deities, "higher" than ordinary spirits, Bang Chan "owed more."

In addition, strengthening foods like rice and fish, the staples for stout farmers, were stressed. Fruit, "which gave no strength," and vegetables (except for the nursing curry mentioned below) were avoided.

The holy fire also transformed a woman into a better nourisher. It gave her new, lasting beneficial nursing habits. As one man explained, "the very nature of water is changed by boiling over a fire. It becomes suk (ripe)." Similarly, a woman's body, her very nature, was permanently changed to suk by the fire's heating. The fire, in fact, made suk all the food she ate beside it. Since this food was turned into milk, her breast milk became suk and so more nourishing, and did not disturb elements.[52] "Food eaten while lying by the fire, when eaten later on (during lactation) by the mother, does not cause diarrhea in the baby." Jackfruit ordinarily caused wind-trouble during lactation, but one woman ate it during the fire-rest, and at once "got used to it, so she could eat it all the time." To make themselves better nourishers, some women spoke of the desirability of "eating a bit of every kind of food." The "nursing curry" (kaeng 'Lang) was a mixture of vegetables.

Finally, the consecrated fire strengthened a woman's own khwan. She could better withstand convulsion if attacked by a spirit.[53] She was able thereby to handle a khwan even without the special magic that existed for it.

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52. To be nourishing even the daily rice had to be made suk by boiling (Anuman Rajadhon:77). It may be that no food was considered nourishing unless suk, either naturally (like ripe fruit) or by cooking.

53. "...when 'involuntarily' entered by ghosts...maidens in the 17-25 age bracket tend to convulse more violently than do women of more advanced years"(Textor:406). "Maidens" were presumably not married and so not suk.

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Thus she performed several rites involving the maintenance of the immature khwan of children and of rice.[54]

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The acme of maternal virtues was manifested in the "good nourishers" (lfang dī). These women had borne many children who "nursed and slept well, did not cry, and easily established good habits." They were lfang dī not just because of the time spent by the fire, for that time could be matched by persons who had lost babies. They were special persons of more than usual capacities for success in nurture. Good to have around for their auspicious influence, they were called upon to inaugurate or help processes concerned with health and growth. They performed, or caught the child in the winnowing ceremony, or gave babies their first suck. They were the persons to whom a sickly child was brought so that his health might be improved by calling the soul and tying holy cord at wrist and ankle (riak khwan). [755] [774]

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54. If a child indfcated by continuous crying that he had lost his khwan, a mature (suk) woman had to be asked to call it back ritually and re-tie it into the body with sacred cord at wrist and ankle. There was no special magic. Her words suffice. Khwan-ladling, a more elaborate and compelling form of the same ceremony, used magical formulae (Textor:401-402). One of Phillips' sentence-completion tests was, "If one is frightened, the best thing to do is..." Of the respondents, 7 women, including one Muslim, would set to work to "call back the khwan" (Phillips:267-268). No man suggested the latter.

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In the agricultural rites, women handled the rice's khwan in basically the same way when it was immature: inviting the young Rice Goddess to stay and grow in the field, and transporting to the house the child-like seed that only next year would grow to maturity. For these rites a woman used an incantation if she knew one. That she could also handle the rice khwan by speaking "extemporaneously" (Textor:429), indicated that her mere words were enough. If no one else were available, a non-suk woman could call the khwan of a child or of the Rice Mother by reason of her in-born female potency, but could not "ladle" a khwan.

562 774 856 [243]

When the khwan was mature (after a person was about age 10) men took over its care. In the men's thaw khwan (khwan-strengthening) rite, here, too, women were the ones to carry off the cloth-and-leaf covering of the baisī (tiered offering) into which the khwan had flitted during the ceremony. The rice-ceremony at the threshing floor was a thaw khwan, so was performed by men.

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156 (riak khwan). Theirs was an augmented personal potency[55] in nurture not unlike the mana so widespread in the Asian-Pacific area.[56] The best midwives were liang di, though not all liang di were midwives. This societal peak was not an unattainable ideal. In the community, certain women were pointed out as liang di and some of them recognized in themselves the validity of this title.

562 The association of rice, motherhood, and khwan now stands
774 clear. Rice made suk by cooking over a fire, was the essential
776 food not only for the body but for the khwan. Growth and life
262 depended on the nourished khwan. Rice came from a maternal figure, the Rice Goddess, Mae Phosop (cf. J.R. Hanks, 1960). Human mothers, too, when made suk, gave suk nourishment: the milk of the breast was merely transformed rice. Whenever rice was eaten throughout human adulthood, the Rice Mother continued her nourishment, for in each grain was a bit of her khwan, nourishing to the human khwan. The rice-bowl and ladle, used in many a ceremony, stood for the maternal care given a human khwan, and by extension, personal care throughout life. Whenever the rice bowl with offerings (khwan khao: soul-[of]-rice) was presented by a parturient or by a sick person, loving care comparable to maternal care was being requested.

182 The idea of re-birth, of a fresh start within the pure
885 area encircled by the holy cord, with auspicious words and
846 consecrated fire, was deep in every life-cycle rite. The
562 particular circumstance of the fire of parturition was a
372 forthright cooking to bring out and increase a woman's essential femaleness, to transform her from a youthful, partial giver into a complete, mature donor of nourishment. Such was the satisfaction of women in this female role that many said they would like to be reborn as women. Few wanted

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55. Anuman Rajadhon (p. 134) reports that in India a newborn girl needed no ritual paraphernalia to keep away spirits because "her sex...is a protection in itself, and spirits cannot come to bother her." This was close to Bang Chan's idea of female potency.

56. Cf. "Mana" (E.R.E. VIII:375) for a quick run-down on a definition of mana.

759 the slight differences in ministrations. "The Muslim mid-
795 wife massages more than the Buddhist." The women easily
844 entered into reciprocal courtesies. The Muslim woman knew
57 the steps in the Buddhist winnowing ceremony and performed
[852] them as desired. One Buddhist mother dispensed, however, with the winnowing "because the midwife was Muslim." A Buddhist woman made up the khwan khāo in the fashion specified by the Muslim midwife and participated in the latter's teacher-rite.

795 Certain fundamental ideas of the Muslims led to rein-
779 terpretations of familiar Buddhist terms and activities.
[774] "Khwan" referred to the soul, but with no implication of reincarnation. "Bun," meaning "merit" to the Buddhist, meant charitable giving in the sense of tithes, for Islam [782] prescribed that a portion of one's income be given to the poor. On the other hand, the Muslims had taken over many [177] Buddhist practices: for one, the acceptance of Buddhist holy water as a cure for spirit attack.

795 Completely Muslim was the stress on physical and
[783] moral purification as an objective of every rite, and conversely, the prevalence of the idea of defilement.
[304] "Circumcision is to cleanse the body before growing up," it was said. Muslim mortuary rites were elaborate pro-
[764] cedures for purification. When a Muslim baby died, the Buddhist midwife said, "The body was cleaned before burial," implying thorough measures beyond his ordinary [831] experience. Procreation was viewed as dangerous and contaminating. The behavior that hid sexual phenomena at [834] the same time by constant prescriptions kept sexuality much more in mind. Muslims separated males from females, [562] for example, at feasts. No Muslim male ever became a midwife.

795 The events surrounding childbirth illustrated the
843 differing viewpoints between Muslim and Buddhist. In the
844 seventh month of her pregnancy, a Muslim woman called on her chosen midwife, and gave her a gift of betel pepper leaves and areca nut to assure her services (fāk thong: to deposit gold). On returning home, she went as [273] fast as possible "to insure fast delivery." Since Muslims frowned on liquor, their medicines were made up of hot-tasting spices in hot water. Yet one Muslim mid-
795 wife prescribed large doses of liquor before and during
844 parturition. For labor and delivery, a Muslim was stricter about utilizing the privacy of the small enclos-
[562] ed room, if there were one, while in the Buddhist household "it could be anywhere" in the house. Muslim men, except for husband, brother, or father, were excluded from the scene. The Muslim khwan khāo contained "7

4:Phillips E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1966
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career. From an epistemological point of view, there is of course nothing strange about such an approach. What is perhaps somewhat unique, however, is that the villagers actually use it as the point of departure in their treatment of the child.

The practical consequences of these equalitarian notions are manifold. For one thing, with the child defined as a separate and equal soul, the relationship between parent and child takes on a highly instrumental flavor; that is, rather than expressing love toward the child as an end in itself or otherwise treating him in ways that require no further justification (it is assumed that love is characteristically an absolute sentiment, not a means to any other satisfaction) villagers explicitly see the relationship between parent and child in contractual terms. Thus villagers say that they "are going to the trouble" of bringing up their children and "doing good things for them" (just as their own parents "went to the trouble" of bringing them up and "doing good things" for them) so that they will have someone to care for them in their old age and make merit for them when they die. Similarly, they say they love their parents because they are indebted to them for bringing them into the world. The language of the "contract" is poignantly explicit: "When I think of my mother, I think of the debt I owe her for bringing me into the world and feeding me so I would survive"; "Parents who do not teach their children how to *waj* [exhibit respect to the parents] get nothing from them. I did many *bunkhuns* [good things requiring reciprocation] for my daughter, so now she gives me everything"; "When I was three my father gave me to my uncle who fed me and trained me, so I loved my uncle more" (cf. pp. 64–66, L. M. Hanks 1959c, and Phillips 1959 for further documentation of this point).

In and of themselves there is nothing strange about these "contractual" criteria. However, they do reflect a fundamental recognition of the independence of parent and child and of the fact that parent and child have the *option* of fulfilling each other's needs. More specifically, they are expressions of the assumption that there is nothing intrinsic to the parent-child relationship that requires the two persons to be linked together. The relationship clearly is not fortuitous, but neither is it absolute. It functions primarily for the instrumental and symbiotic satisfactions that its participants can gain from it.[28] Lacking the absolute elements of an ultimate

[28] In his paper on "Changes in Family Life" in Bang Chan (1959c) L. M. Hanks notes: "At birth a parent ceremonially formally accepts obligations to an unknown infant soul lightly bound to its body; to this point the new-born one without relation to its parent has been under the protection of a spirit mother. This phrasing contrasts sharply with the Occidental concept of 'flesh and blood.'" In another place in the manuscript, Hanks also comments: ". . . but every case [every kinship tie] is reducible, if one presses the question, to benefits of an older or richer or stronger for the

4:Phillips E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1966
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human beings. In fact, the absence of any reference to other human beings, especially parents, is striking.

Of the seventeen persons who ask for supernatural help, seven, all women, explicitly say that they would call their *khwaan* (or "soul-stuff") back. Since this is a distinctively Thai concept, it merits a few words of explanation. Thai ontology holds that every individual is inhabited by a *khwaan*, who during childhood (when the individual is unstable and immature) or during a crisis can escape the body through an invisible hole in the head. One of the major functions of the top-knot worn by half the children of Bang Chan is to cover the invisible hole so that the *khwaan*

TABLE 21

If one is frightened, the best thing to do is . . .
If raw is frightened, the best thing raw ought to do is (namely) . . .

EQUANIMITY:	40%	to keep his heart calm.
		to pull yourself together (to try to compose yourself). Sometimes, just run away.
		to control oneself.
		to control your emotions until they are better.
		to stay *chəəj-chəəj*.
DEPENDENCY:	31%	to exclaim, "Lord help me!"
		to call one's soul-stuff back; call upon God, Allah.
		to think of Lord Buddha, his teaching, and his priests.
		to sometimes exclaim, *"phra chuaj"* ("Lord Buddha, or Buddhism, or monks—help me.")
FLIGHT:	8%	to avoid the situation: to run away.

cannot escape; also most life-cycle ceremonies have a special ritual devoted to "calling the *khwaan*," who although obviously not absent from the individual at the time, is called to reaffirm the necessity of his being in his place when the individual needs him most. At the same time, the formal ritual of "calling the *khwaan*" memorializes the fact that the *khwaan* is in his proper place, thus indicating that the individual in whom he resides has had the internal stability to reach the point in life that he has in fact reached. The "calling of the *khwaan*" is usually, although not always, performed by women, which might explain why all the villagers who give this response are female. The *khwaan* has four crucial attributes: (1) although he is of the self, he does have an independent existence of his own; (2) he is that part of the self that gives the self stability, and from an analytic point of view, is really an objectification of human stability; (3) he

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774 is recognized to be capricious; and (4) his departure from the body is both cause and effect of the loss of one's wits, steadiness, and equilibrium. If the *khwaan* stays away too long, the individual may become deranged and may die.

*125 *128 152 181 828 In these terms, the seven individuals who say that when they are frightened they would call back their "soul-stuff" seem to be expressing two related needs: a recognition of their ultimate dependence on supernatural forces and, very much like the majority group of informants, a preoccupation with psychological stability. There is in fact implicit to these responses almost an assumption that one of the marks of an adult, civilized "human being" (in its basic ontological sense) is the achievement of stability, orderliness, and stoicism in a universe—both inner and outer—that at any time may regress to a more primitive, chaotic state. The great attention that villagers give to being *riab-rɔɔj* (neat, clean, well-organized in appearance, demeanor, and speech); the fact that they often distinguish between adults and children in terms of the disorganization and randomness of the latter's behavior; the very fact that an individual's *khwaan* is most wayward during childhood; the high value that is placed upon being *chɔɔj* and the negative value that is placed on having a "hot heart" (*caj rɔɔn*) are all expressive of this assumption.

*125 *128 152 There are a few other categories of response to the above item that should be mentioned, although none is held by more than 8 percent of the sample. Four villagers say that the best thing to do when frightened is to run away; three villagers assert that they are never frightened; three do say that they would investigate the cause of the fright, indicating that this response is not completely lacking in Bang Chan; two say that they would comfort themselves; two are simply afraid; and two more have no idea of what to do under the circumstances.

To the item, *"When something worried him, he usually . . ."* 45 percent of the sample responds by saying that they would feel anxious, uneasy, uncomfortable, or unhappy. In essence, they seek no solution to their hypothetical problem, but simply accept the state of anxiety that has been created. For a few of them, the anxiety is extreme: they say they "could not eat, could not sleep, could not work," a response that I have heard several times in Bang Chan from villagers who were actually worrying through a problem. The other major response, held by 40 percent of the sample, is to perseverate over the problem: to keep thinking about it, to think about it constantly, or, as one villager expresses it, *"When something worried him, he usually . . .* thought about it. Sometimes he dreamt of it too."

The major theme of both the above responses is, of course, that although villagers handle their worries in an emotionally meaningful way,